

Deuteronomy 28 - Thursday, December 15th, 2011

(1) "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. (2) And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

- It's important to note how Moses says what he says in this his third of five sermons for the Israelites before they enter into the Promised-Land.
- Instead of curses being pronounced upon them as we saw in the previous chapter, these blessings will come upon them here in this chapter.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it speaks to how God, first and foremost, desires for us to be blessed.

(3) "Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country. (4) "Blessed *shall* be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. (5) "Blessed *shall* be your basket and your kneading bowl.

- Notice that these blessings are for city folk, and country folk, as well as fertility for the fruit of the womb, and prosperity for the fruit of the labor.
- Not only would God bless the bringing home of the bacon, so too would he bless the baskets, bowls, and pans that the bacon is fried up in.
- I'm not the brightest bulb in the pack, but this seems to pretty much cover everything as it relates to my daily life, both at work, and in the home.

(6) "Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

- This blessing is truly amazing because it means that God will not only bless us in everything we do, so too will He bless us everywhere we go.
- In other words, God's blessing will come upon us no matter our location or vocation, and we will also be blessed whether we're coming or going.
- If it is starting to sound a little like God is looking for every reason to bless us, it's probably because God is looking for every reason to bless us.

(7) "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

- What's interesting about this blessing is that it has to do with the way in which God would defend the Israelites before their enemies, militarily.
- Its not so much "that" God will do it, as much as it is "how" God will do it. He will intervene in a supernatural way and drive their enemies away.
- I believe that this has a powerful application to our lives in how that the Lord desires to defend us against the enemy who desires to defeat us.

Proverbs 16:7 NKJV When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

(8) "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

- This blessing meant that they wouldn't have to live hand to mouth. Perhaps better said for purpose of our understanding, paycheck-to-paycheck.
- God is saying He would so bless them that they would have more than enough at the end of each month to put money away into their savings.
- You sort of get the impression that God doesn't want His people just scraping by. He wants to provide plenty of provisions so they never lack.

(9) "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

- This blessing speaks of a fulfilled life by virtue of how empty they would be spiritually in spite of how prospered with plenty they were financially.
- This probably reminds you of what Jesus said in Mark 8:36 about how much it would profit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his own soul.
- The fact of the matter is that mans material quest to fill a spiritual void actually serves to make him emptier than he ever was before he started.

(10) Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.

- Here, Moses makes very clear, why it is that God does this, this way. It's chiefly for God's glory not theirs, lest they become proud and arrogant.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the greatest dangers to Christians whom God blesses financially, this would have to be it, pride.
- We are all so prone to think that our wealth was wrought through our own savvy and financial prowess, and the result is that we will be haughty.

Deuteronomy 8:18 NKJV "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Proverbs 10:22 NIV The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 NIV Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God.

(11) And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. (12) The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

(13) And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them*. (14) So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, *to* the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

- If you're anything like me, and I think you are, it's most difficult to read this passage without thinking about the current plight of the United States.
- Once upon a time, not so long ago, we were the lender and not the borrower, and we were the head and not the tail. Now the opposite is true.
- Statistically and factually you can actually trace the demise of our once most powerful nation on earth to the time that we turned away from God.

(15) "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

- We round a corner from the curses being pronounced upon them, to the blessings coming upon them, to even more curses coming upon them.
- What determined whether or not they were blessed or cursed was the obedience to the voice of God, and the commands and statutes of God.
- Before we get into the curses, I must warn you that the enormity and the intensity will have the propensity to really discourage and depress you.

(16) "Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the country. (17) "Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

(18) "Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. (19)

"Cursed *shall you be* when you come in, and cursed *shall you be* when you go out.

- The first thing we see right out of the shoot is that these curses are the antithesis of the blessings, in how they are the exact opposite of them.
- You'll forgive me in advance for not getting into the gory details of every single one of these curses, as I intend to simply talk briefly about them.
- That's not to say we'll skip over them, rather we'll skim through them, and in so doing gain an understanding of the seriousness of disobedience.

(20) "The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. (21) The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. (22) The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

- As gnarly as these verses are there's something here that warrants a closer look as it relates to willful disobedience affects us and infects us.
- I would suggest that disobedience to God can be linked to the emotional problems psychologically, and even medical problems physiologically.
- I can't get over how this passage describes confusion and paranoia setting in. Perhaps this is what breaks down the bodies natural immunities.

(23) And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron. (24) The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

- This would seem to indicate that God would literally shut the heavens up, and dry the earth up so that there's no way for their crops to grow.

(25) "The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. (26) Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away. (27) The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. (28) The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. (29) And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save *you*.

- While I am keenly aware that this just keeps getting worse, as we'll see next, it gets even worse than having the Lord strike them in this manner.

(30) "You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. (31) Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue *them*. (32) Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be* no strength in your hand.

- As graphic as this is, one cannot help but realize how true this really is. The bottom line is that sin will cost us our marriages and our families.

(33) A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. (34) So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. (35) The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. (36) "The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. (37) And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

- Sadly, this horrific description would become a reality for the Israelites at the hands of the Assyrians, Babylonians and finally under the Romans.

(38) "You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. (39) You shall plant vineyards and tend *them*, but you shall neither drink *of* the wine nor gather the *grapes*; for the worms shall eat them. (40) You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. (41) You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. (42) Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land. (43) "The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. (44) He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

- Again, we see in these curses the exact opposite of God's blessing. What's missed in all of this is the sway, i.e. plus ten minus ten equal twenty.

(45) "Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. (46) And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

- For anyone who would dare to question how our sin affects those close to us, and those who come after us, you need look no further than this.

(47) "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, (48) therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

- Call me silly, but I think this could be applied to how it is that we're all prone to complaining and murmuring about how hard serving the Lord is.

(49) The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, (50) a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. (51) And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. (52) "They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you.

- It's almost as if God is writing their history before it happens by virtue of this being exactly what, yet future, will take place with the Israelites.

(53) You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. (54) The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, (55) so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. (56) The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, (57) her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

- I had these verses in mind in particularly, when I made the decision to not get to in depth into this for what would be deemed obvious reasons.

- Suffice it to say and be that as it may this is exactly what happened according to the account found in 2 Kings 6:24-30 and Lamentations 4:1-11.

(58) "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, (59) then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. (60) Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. (61) Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. (62) You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. (63) And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. (64) "Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. (65) And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. (66) Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. (67) In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see. (68) "And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy *you*."

- Right about now, you're probably thinking to yourself that you've never been so glad to finish a chapter in the Bible as this one here. I am!

- So as to not end on such an intense note, let me encourage you by saying that this is what happens to those who willfully turn away from God.

- In other words, this is not what happens to those of us who are walking with the Lord, and have not deliberately turned our backs on the Lord.